

# Grocery: an essential guide for the busy bees

Only those who have lived abroad on their own can understand the anguish of having to cook their own meals after a day of hard work, or at university. No matter how daunting the task, there is no one to share the responsibility, or even help!

The following is a modest grocery list, depending on the cuisine one prefers. Maintaining a stock of all of the suggested ingredients below is probably the best thing to do — it just might save you a 30-minute drive to satiate the craving for 'daal-bhaat-lebu'.

## FOR CUISINES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

### Cereals and breakfast foods

Buy cereals and cereal bars that are high in fibre and low in sugar. Use berries, dried fruit, or nuts to add sweetness to your cereal.

### Produce

Fruits, vegetables. Look for a large variety of colourful fruits and vegetables. They have the most nutrients.

### Pasta and rice

Brown rice; whole wheat or whole-grain

pasta. Again, favour whole grains whenever possible.

### Soups and canned goods

While buying canned fruits, choose brands that are packed in juice, rather than syrup.

### Meat and seafood

Skinless or chicken; salmon, trout or mackerel. If you buy red meat, choose the leanest cuts.

### OILS, SAUCES, SALAD DRESSINGS, AND CONDIMENTS

Tomato sauce, mustard, barbecue sauce, red-wine vinegar, salsa, extra virgin olive oil, canola oil, non-fat cooking spray, jarred capers and olives, and hot pepper sauce.

### Frozen foods

Fruits, shrimp, low-fat ice cream or yoghurt, whole-grain waffles, or whole-grain vegetable pizza. Buy frozen vegetables to throw into soups, casseroles, and stews.

### Dairy, cheese, and eggs

Skim or low-fat milk or soymilk, fat-free or low-fat yoghurt, fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheese, butter or spread (a variety that does not contain hydrogenated oils).

### Snacks and crackers

Whole-grain crackers, dried fruits, nuts, seeds, peanut butter, almond, or soy butter, dark chocolate pieces (containing more than 70 percent cocoa)

### SHOPPING LIST FOR 'DESHI'

#### INDULGENCES

Rice  
Rice flour  
Wheat flour  
Dals (lentils) —  
Red gram dal (toor dal)  
Bengalgram dal (channa dal)  
Green gram dal (mung dal)  
Black gram dal  
Tea leaves and sugar  
Jaggery  
Spices —  
Coriander seeds (dhania)  
Mustard seeds  
Fenugreek seeds  
Pepper corns, Cumin seeds  
Red chillies, dried  
Tamarind, Salt  
Asafoetida  
Gingelly seeds (sesame seeds)  
Turmeric powder, Baking soda  
Cardamom

### MAMA'S PICK

Tacos  
Coriander, tomato, chilli  
Chorizo sausage, Chicken  
Chicken Broth  
Butter or margarine or olive oil  
Vegetable of choice  
Eggs, Sugar 250g, Milk 250g

### MUST HAVES FOR A QUICK

#### THAI MEAL

Soy sauce  
Oyster sauce (Note: Both oyster sauce and soy contains salt; only a small amount of extra salt should be added).

Chicken stock (Note: You can find them in any super store in liquid form in juice packs or Knorr chicken stock cubes) this adds salt and flavour to your meals. If you do not want to use this, adding only water is sufficient.

Crushed or chopped garlic, ginger, onions, and herbs of your choice. (Note: Herbs add flavour but it's optional).

Dairy —  
Ghee  
Milk  
Curd



## RECIPE

# Tweaking the kitchen ball

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## VEGETABLE STIR FRY

Heat oil in a wok. Add two onions (slices), a clove of garlic and ginger (chopped), and stir until flavour is released. Now add vegetables like snow peas, cauliflower, bok choy, bean sprouts, capsicum mushroom, or zucchini. Any combination of vegetables you have or like will work fine. Stir fry until done and have with rice.

## STEAMED FISH

Any type of fish will work for this recipe and you can increase or decrease the recipe quantity as needed. Take any mild flavoured, flaky fish fillets. Try halibut, cod, salmon, red snapper, trout, etc. Serve with white rice but first, flavour the rice with butter and salt.

Marinate the fillets with salt, lemon juice, pepper, garlic and ginger slices, slit green chillies and 2 teaspoons of oil, and 1 spoon of soy sauce or oyster sauce or both. Kindly note, both oyster sauce and soy sauce have a bit of salt in them, so adjust your salt accordingly.

For a slightly hot flavour, you can add a spoon or less of chilli powder. Dill or coriander herbs, few stems of bok choy would be great here too.

Steam it in a steamer, if you do not have access to a steamer use a large pot fill it

with water and wrap the fish fillet in foil and place it on a plate and steam it by placing the lid of the pot on top.

## PASTA MUMMY STYLE

### For the meat sauce:

In a pot, put oil, salt, chopped garlic and onions, a few slit chillies and the mince-meat (preferably chicken mince because it cooks fast) and stir. When the juices from the meat are released, add two spoons of oyster sauce, a spoon of soy sauce and 1 or 2 cups of tomato puree, according to your taste, and cook.

In a separate pan, boil the pasta, add a pinch of salt and a few drops of oil to the water so that the pasta doesn't stick together. Drain the pasta when thoroughly boiled, add a cup or two of the drained pasta water to the meat sauce and stir.

When you think the meat sauce looks and tastes good, add cheese and herbs. Then serve it over the hot pasta or you can mix the two in a pan. If you store the meat sauce in a container, you can have it on top of rotis or naans or breads as breakfast. Even rice.

## BEEF/CHICKEN STEAK

For the marinade, add 2 spoons of garlic ginger paste, 1 spoon of chilli powder, oyster sauce and soy 1 spoon each, salt, oil

and pepper. Mix everything together and marinate the steak for at least an hour. Next, place it on a hot grill till done. If you have any leftover, cut it into pieces, stir fry with bok choy or spinach and have it with rice.

## MASHED POTATO MUMMY STYLE

Boil and peel the potato, mash it and add salt and pepper, butter and a spoon of powdered milk. For alo bharta (mashed potato) add salt, chilli, onions and mustard oil to the mashed potatoes (note: buy a small bottle of mustard oil for an added 'deshi' flavour) and have it with rice.

## DAL BHORTA

Boil the mushuri daal (the red daal) till tender, then add salt chilli and onions, and mustard oil. Serve with rice.

## KHICHURI IN RICE COOKER

In a separate pan, boil half a cup of mung daal (the yellow variety). Wash ½ portion of the rice, use the rice cooker pot; add the boiled daal, add salt, half a tea spoon of turmeric and chilli powder, add onion slices, slit chillies, half teaspoon of garlic and ginger paste add 2 tea spoon of mustard oil or any oil mix it. Add 2 rice cooker pot water and cook. Have it with omelettes and chicken.

## BEEF AND CHICKEN CURRY FOR RICE AND KHICHURI

Get thinly sliced fillet for this so that it can

easily cook and boil. In a wok, add oil, chilli, onions slices, salt, garlic and ginger paste, half a teaspoon of turmeric and chilli, half a spoon of meat masala, and stir it. Add your choice of meat and stir, add a cup of water on medium heat, cook until done.

## DAAL MUMMY STYLE

Boil half a rice cooker pot of 'mushurir daal' in a pot with 2 rice cooker pot of water, add slices on onions to it and salt and a green chilli or two. When you see your daal thoroughly cooked, try to mash it with a spoon that mashes potatoes and such.

Please note you will not reduce the water like 'chorchori'. The excess water will stay.

Once your daal is mashed, keep it aside in the pot, take a separate pan, put a few spoons of oil (mustard oil, if you want a deshi flavour), one garlic and onion slices -- fry it in the oil until brown then add this hot oil to the liquid daal in the separate pot. This is called tempering and it will create steam and odour but you have to keep the fan or exhaust on for this. Once it's done, put coriander leaves and green chilli. Have it with rice.

By RBR

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